

Dear Chair Pinto and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to express my support for H.F. 1277, which would end waiting lists for the Early Learning Scholarships program and fund all eligible children.

I am the mother of two children (Hank, 8, and Betty, 4) who have benefited from early learning scholarships and access to quality child care. In all honesty I do not know how we would have been able to afford childcare without Child Care Assistance and early learning scholarships. Being able to afford child care meant being able to continue our career paths as low-income parents.

Through access to early education, Hank and Betty have developed foundational building blocks towards kindergarten, and have become caring and kind tiny community members through attention to their social-emotional development. I have seen their imaginations and vocabularies expand, and most importantly, they look forward to school every day.

Please consider increasing funding for the early care and education space, including Early Learning Scholarships.

Warm Regards,

Erin Carik